

Interpreting Body Language DBT Worksheet

Client information

Full name:

Age:

Gender:

Date submitted:

Worksheet objective

To increase your understanding of body language to improve your communication with others.

What you should know

Communication is not only verbal; it also includes non-verbal signals like body language, which can often be more telling than words. Understanding body language can help you interpret what people are really saying and can also help you become more aware of the signals you are sending.

What to do

Below is a list of common physical cues and emotions, including some questions and prompts to help you think more deeply about body language and how it impacts your interactions.

Common physical cues and related emotions

Eye contact or gazing into the eyes:

- Attention
- Caring
- Affection

Smiling, talkative, clapping hands, singing, jumping up and down, dancing, laughing:

- Joy
- Excitement
- Happiness

Red flushed face and neck, clenched hands, pursed lips, crossed arms, hands on hips, looking down or away, clenched teeth, frowning, staring:

- Anger
- Dislike
- Annoyance
- Aggression

Frowning, looking down or away, slumped posture; low, quiet, or monotone voice:

- Sadness
- Hurt

Talking quickly and nervously, inability to sit still, shaking, pacing, speechlessness, crossed arms, frozen in place, sweating:

- Anxiety
- Nervousness
- Fear

Covering face, hiding, slumping, looking down or away:

- Shame
- Embarrassment
- Guilt

Can you think of others? Please describe below

Exercise 1: Observing others

Think of a time when you realized someone was angry, sad, happy, or anxious, based on their facial expressions, posture, or gestures. Describe the physical signals you noticed.

Think of a time when you realized someone was not paying attention as you spoke to them, based on their facial expressions, posture, or gestures. Describe the physical signals you noticed.

Clarifying questions

Here are sample clarifying questions you could and should ask:

- "You look upset. Is everything alright?"
- "I notice you seem nervous. Am I correct?"
- "How are you feeling?"
- "Are things okay between us?"

List other clarifying questions here:

Exercise 2: Self-reflection

Have you ever been told your words did not match your body language? Explain.

Has a person ever understood you were mad, sad, anxious, etc., in spite of what you said or did not say? Explain.

Next, think of a recent challenging interaction you had with someone. Describe the interaction.

Describe your emotions during those three scenarios.

Describe the physical sensations you experienced.

Describe facial expressions, posture, and movements you remember expressing.

Exercise 3: Role play

Try this exercise with your therapist or someone you trust, using a recent or imaginary scenario of a difficult conversation. Act out how it would go and respond based on your emotions. Exhibit body language accordingly. The topic will be up to you and your therapist/trusted companion.

Describe the interaction.

Describe how you interpreted the other person's emotions.

Did the person's body language impact the way you responded? Explain.

Exercise 4: Reflections

What are potential upcoming situations where you think body language and nonverbal cues matter?

What body language elements and nonverbal cues should I work on improving?

What did you learn from this exercise?

How helpful was this exercise?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not very helpful				Moderately helpful					Extremely helpful